

The LENINIST

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After Walton: Where now?

The significance of the Walton by-election did not lie in the battle between Labour, the Tories and the Liberal Democrats, but rather in the battle between Labour and Real Labour

THE WALTON by-election saw the Tories humiliated. That was good; the Tory scum are the preferred party of the ruling class. In their worst by-election result since 1918 they lost their deposit and only managed to secure 1,155 votes, or 2.8% of the poll. As to the Liberal Democrats, despite seeing their share of the vote increase from 21% to 36% they still trailed far behind the victorious Labour candidate Peter Kilfoyle. However, as the TV computers instantly told us on the night, this had been Labour's 6th safest seat. The 23,253 majority which Eric Heffer had built tumbled to 6,860, mainly as a result of well over a third of Labour's traditional supporters staying away (there was only a 56.5% turnout).

Of course, the significance of the Walton by-election did not lie in statistics, nor in the conventional tussle between the main Westminster parties. The real fight in Liverpool is between the working class on one side and the Labour controlled council and the Tory government on the other.

Inevitably this struggle still takes an impure form. We have yet to arrive at a situation where all workers see themselves as part of the same anti-capitalist army: there are those with advanced, middle and backward consciousness. It was this spread of *impure* politics that found *imperfect*, but nonetheless real, reflection in the Walton by-election in the clash between the official Labour Party and Walton Real Labour, the *nomme de guerre* of Liverpool's Broad Left and Militant Tendency.

There can be no doubt that by coming only a poor third, by getting only 6.5% of the vote, Lesley Mahmood was soundly beaten. Yet, for a 'fringe party', Real Labour faced an unprecedented propaganda assault. The Labour leader launched a low life attack on Militant-led striking council workers, Alan Bleasdale's *GBH* was conveniently scheduled, an indelible linkage was made between uncollected binbags and Militant in *The Sun*, *Daily Express*, *Daily Mirror* and the rest of the bosses' media; taken together all this amounted to a McCarthyite witch hunt.

The 'real' versus 'official' Labour Party contest was more than an internal Labour Party squabble. The Labour Party might be a bourgeois party in terms of its leaders and programme. It is, though, a bourgeois *workers'* party. Not surprisingly then, in Britain a real working class movement often finds initial expression in the form of Labourite politics, through the left. This has undoubtedly been the case with the anti-poll tax movement and the fight against cuts in jobs and services in Liverpool.

Where the three establishment parties stood on programmes of capitalist rationality, which necessitate more attacks on an already decimated Liverpool and its workers' jobs and rights,

Lesley Mahmood fought as a "socialist candidate" who wanted to defend those jobs and rights. Where Kilfoyle is now looking forward to junior ministerial positions, expenses paid overseas trips and the countless other 'perks' of a Labour MP's job, Mahmood promised that she would have been a workers' MP living on a workers' wage. It was precisely because of these politics that she and 600 others in Liverpool have fallen victim to Kinnock's purge and have found themselves *outside* the Labour Party.

But there was more to Mahmood than promises. She was the candidate of those millions who refused to pay the poll tax, the candidate of militant resistance to the effects of capitalist decline. So she was, in point of fact, no fringe candidate. Here was someone who, through the distorting prism of Militant politics, represented a real movement from within the working class and the labour movement.

That is why we supported Mahmood. The statement of the Provisional Central Committee of the CPGB made our position perfectly clear: "For partisans of the working class the choice is obvious: there can be no support for Kilfoyle or Kinnock's Labour Party. We must support Lesley Mahmood: a victory for the Broad Left will be a victory for struggle over passivity, a victory for those who call themselves socialists against the explicitly pro-capitalist politics of the Labour Party, a victory for the future against the past."

Naturally we opposed those who urged a boycott. Such a 'tactic' is entirely inappropriate in the conditions of 1991 Britain in general, and Walton in particular. For communists, the boycott tactic should only be used in the most extreme circumstances, namely when the masses have *no* illusions in parliament, usually on the eve of a revolutionary insurrection. In spite of Militant's ridiculous talk of Liverpool being Britain's Petrograd, no such circumstances exist today (more's the pity). Given this, it is *obligatory* for communists to participate in the electoral process. Those leftist groups who urged a boycott might have learnt this or that abstract principle, but Walton shows them irredeemably trapped in the pit of sectarianism, doomed eventually to become essentially reactionary.

We also opposed those miserable organisations which backed Kilfoyle in the name of either beating the Tories or pursuing their aim of being seen as respectable by Kinnock. The *Socialist*

Action, *Socialist Organiser* and *Labour Briefing* Trotskyoids and the CPB and NCP 'official communists' thus not only lined up with the bosses' "second eleven" but put their narrow organisational interests above a real movement of the working class. (Incidentally it is worth noting that the *Morning Star* dismissed the standing of a candidate against official Labour as "adventurist and divisive" - does this apply to past communist election campaigns against the Labour Party?)

Of course, no one should have given Mahmood and the Broad Left anything other than critical support. We wanted to see Mahmood elected in order to show those who support her that we need to go further, that we need a party of revolution, a Communist Party, not a Broad Left, not a 'socialist' Labour Party nor a 'real' Labour Party.

Militant is a right centrist organisation which says it is revolutionary and Marxist. In terms of practice, Militant has earned itself a tarnished record in Liverpool with its disastrous 'socialism in one city' experiment between 1983-87. In terms of programme, moreover, it is committed to reformism. It still believes that socialism can come through a Labour majority in parliament. The front page of its paper relentlessly carries the slogan: "Labour to power on a socialist programme" - yet, as we all know, Labour has never been a party for socialism (which can only be the dictatorship of the working class), and when it comes to *office* it always has and always will fawningly carry out the wishes of capitalism.

Militant has *itself* exposed the limitations and contradictions in *its own* programme. Militant played the leading (and in the main honourable) role in making the hated poll tax unworkable and fighting *compulsory* redundancies in Liverpool. In doing so it found itself catapulted to the front of mass movements. But it is precisely this that has thrown into crisis its whole strategy of changing the Labour Party into a vehicle for socialism.

After four decades of entrism work in the Labour Party, after subordinating everything to this, it found its leaders and activists ruthlessly and effortlessly expelled *because* they have succeeded in leading workers in struggle. The Kinnockite Labour Party wants to serve capitalism and it will punish and expel anyone who dares try to challenge it. Faced with this painful but inescapable contradiction, Militant first sought retreat and accommodation, then it

wobbled; then, hesitatingly, it broke from its *own* programme.

After seeing five out of six Broad Left candidates succeed against official Labour candidates in local elections, Militant decided it was in a position to fight the Walton by-election against the official Labour candidate Kilfoyle, who only got selected because of the massive purge of Walton Labour Party (in which he played a prominent and shameful leading part).

Militant's Lesley Mahmood might have opportunistically called herself the candidate of the *Real* Labour Party; however, Walton Real Labour has no trade union affiliates nor will it ever be represented at Labour's annual conference - both of which Militant has in the past considered central to its whole political project.

The decision by Militant to stand Mahmood disproves its contention that Labour can be transformed into a socialist party. It points, albeit tentatively and incoherently, to the necessity of workers in Britain building a genuine alternative, not only to Kinnock's Labour Party but to capitalism itself. That party can only be the Communist Party, the party our organisation is uniquely committed to reforging.

As we have argued time and time again, this can only be done through the fusing of the ideological struggle for communism with the real movement of the working class: then we can replace the equally useless Labour Party and the Trotskyoid and 'official communist' sects with a genuine organisation of working class struggle. It was with this aim we wrote, canvassed and leafleted for Mahmood.

Elections in themselves are hardly the locomotive of history. Nevertheless if Mahmood had done well or even won, it would have undoubtedly marked a watershed in British politics. Even within the realm of bourgeois politics a whole cascade of developments could have followed. Where the Labour Party competed on the right throughout the last half of the 1980s it would have been forced to compete on the left (just as it did when our Communist Party was challenging it in the early 1920s). Certainly the whole political debate in the working class movement could have been shifted towards the central question of revolutionary politics in Britain - namely how to build an alternative to the Labour Party and what form that alternative should take - that is a perfect terrain for our politics.

Unfortunately Mahmood lost and

lost badly. This does not lead us, with the advantage of hindsight, to ditch our position. Our critical support for Mahmood was dictated by necessity, by what is needed. We were not backing Mahmood because she was a cert, but because in she represented a real movement within the working class which, in spite of Labourite prejudices and reformist limitations, was taking steps towards what is necessary.

So why did Mahmood lose so badly and what does the immediate future hold in store?

Mahmood did not lose simply because of the slick ghost of Derek Hatton conjured up by Kinnock, the press and the media. She did not lose only because of the contradiction between the "Labour to power" politics of a Militant which was supporting her *against* the Labour Party.

Fundamentally, Mahmood lost because of the period we are living through: a period of reaction. This has seen counterrevolution sweep through Eastern Europe and into the Soviet Union. As a result, the ideas of socialism and social change are discredited.

Under these conditions, Walton Real Labour was a weak vessel for the already diverse anti-poll tax movement, which although massive had a very diffuse organisational form and no strategic direction. Yet to have got 2,613 votes for such an organisation and in these conditions points to the existence of a distinct class minority in Liverpool and throughout the country which we must win. Without them, we cannot win the majority.

Before that though, in the short term, Mahmood's defeat will most likely see Militant's right wing parliamentary, trade union and council grandees drag the rest of the organisation back into the straightjacket of the heads down deep entrism programme. This will be in spite of Kinnock's expected massive purge of the Labour left. Terry Fields and David Nellist have already been lined up for a night of the long knives. So have hundreds who were *photographed* in Orwellian fashion working in support of Mahmood, along with those who dared display Walton Real Labour posters in their windows!

These moves will affect the whole of the left in Britain. The left in the trade union movement will face its own witch hunt, the pressure will be well and truly on not to rock the Kinnockite boat. The argument for a revolutionary alternative to Labourism too will be far harder as British politics continues its drift to the right.

All this makes the existence and growth of organisations supporting the Provisional Central Committee of the CPGB all the more important and urgent. Reaction will not last. While it does we can and must swim against the tide.

Jack Conrad



Central Organ of the
Provisional Central Committee of the
Communist Party of Great Britain

PROGRESS towards some sort of a united federal Europe seems unstoppable. Little England 'official communists' and Bennites raise the tattered red, white and blue flag of national sovereignty; Ridley and the Bruges Group cry treachery from the political margins and Thatcher desperately conjures up a Euro-American free trade zone as a hopeless alternative. But it is of no use, the federalist juggernaut is rolling.

What lies behind this development? What will be the results? How should workers respond?

Moves towards a united Europe are not the result of some new found international idealism growing in the stoney hearts of our rulers. From a 'fortress Europe' they hope to pursue their grubby imperialist ambitions and exploit the world. Nor is it due to the ruling class learning the bitter lessons of two European centred world wars which left tens of millions dead and Berlin, Dresden, Leningrad and Rotterdam in ruins.

Behind the drive towards a united Europe is the perpetual revolutionising of the productive forces that is intrinsic to capitalism, and its need to market ever greater amounts of commodities. This labour of Sisyphus can only fuel and then crystallise new inter-imperialist contradictions, ie the very factors which caused World Wars I and II.

In isolation, the states that patchwork the map of Europe are in a hopeless position. The United States and Japan possess more dynamic capitals and will, if they are allowed, reduce even the larger European powers to South American status: already pundits are predicting that by the year 2000 there will only be *four* serious computer firms in the world, *two* in the US, *two* in Japan. Faced with this prospect being repeated in one high tech area and one market after another, it is either sink separately or swim together.

Of course Britain in particular fears German domination. It dreams of retaining its so-called 'special relationship' with the USA and pretensions to being a great world power. This nostalgia shows just how far Britain has declined as a world power; how directionless its foreign policy has become as a result. Nonetheless, for all the pedantic objections to the word 'federalism', Britain is now irreversibly tied into the European economic orbit with a hegemonic Germany as its hub.

As much as some left reformists and right Tories may protest, for British imperialism there can be no going back to self sufficient sovereignty (which anyway was based on the ruthless exploitation of a quarter of the world's population). Capitalism moves according to real laws, not sentiment.

The self devastation of Europe in World War II saw the focus of world power wash away from it to the east and the west, namely to the Soviet Union and the United States. A federal German-dominated Europe will reverse that situation.

The Soviet Union has lost Eastern Europe and is in danger of disintegration as well as counterrevolution. The US is debt ridden and, in spite of its Gulf War and Cold War victories, still continues its relative decline. Even if the US succeeds in creating a North American Free Trade Association by incorporating Mexico with its huddled mass of cheap labour, or even a free trade zone stretching from Anchorage in Alaska to Tierra del Fuego, it could not prevent Europe from challenging it for the position of the world's leading economic and political power.

Clearly what this holds in store is more than trade war, it holds within it the seeds of World War III.

Given this, while communists should not hark back to the reactionary past, neither can we say yes to a reactionary united capitalist Europe. True, the official labour movement is increasingly enamoured with Jacques Delors and a federal Europe. But that is the result of frustration at its own impotency in the face of the Tory government, and the carrot of the Social Charter.

Workers have as much interest in a bosses' Europe as they have in a bosses' Britain. The boss class in Britain, Europe and worldwide are our bitter and deadly enemies. We must not let the labour bureaucracy sell our class interests to Euro imperialism for the promise of petty reforms.

Communists and the working class have no country, neither in the form of Britain nor a federal Europe. Nevertheless, although our struggle is international, we organise on the basis of the existing capitalist state; we do so in order to overthrow that state. If the bosses move towards a federal European state our aim must be European wide struggle for revolution and a United Socialist States of Europe: our biggest contribution to the realisation of a United Socialist States of the World.

The Editor

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LETTERS Stalinism

I don't understand your 'neither Stalin nor Trotsky' analysis (which is what it is, in effect). In one of your papers you say that you "do not share Trotsky's degenerated workers' state analysis". Why exactly? Your analysis of the Soviet Union seems very similar to Trotsky's, a sort of neo-Trotskyism. You agree that the Soviet bureaucracy acts as an "absolute fetter", not a relative one, with regards to economic development (towards socialism); you talk about the "horrendous bureaucratisation" in the Soviet Union and other Stalinist states, and you agree there is a "repressive, bureaucratic caste" in the Soviet Union. This all sounds like a degenerated workers' state to me!

You ridicule some Trotskyists for their expression "counterrevolutionary revolution". Yes, I agree, it is a very awkward expression and *appears* contradictory. But is it? You must attempt to understand the reasoning behind that expression, not just make fun of it. The Fourth International Trotskyists (and others) were attempting to understand a political phenomenon which Marx, Engels and Lenin had not anticipated, even in their wildest dreams (or should I say nightmares?). Namely, that capitalism was overthrown in a bureaucratic, counter-revolutionary fashion from *way above* (ie, the tanks of the Red Army), not by the organised working class. Surely that is undeniable? It was not a working class revolution, in the sense that they only had a minor (if not negligible) role to play (of course, there were different circumstances in each of the eastern European states, it was not a uniform phenomenon).

Leon Trotsky described it like this in *In Defence of Marxism*: "This measure, revolutionary in character - 'the expropriation of the expropriators' - is in this case achieved in a military bureaucratic fashion. The appeal to the independent activity on the part of the masses in the new territories - and without such an appeal, even if worded with extreme caution, it is impossible to constitute a new regime - will on the morrow undoubtedly be suppressed by ruthless police measures in order to assure the preponderance of the bureaucracy over the awakened revolutionary masses."

This is, of course, exactly what happened. The "ruthless police measures" were probably more savage than even Trotsky could envisage. As far as I am concerned this is as obvious as that day follows night. What do you think?

Next, Your main criticism of Trotsky is the fact that he labelled the world communist movement as counterrevolutionary after 1933 and formed the Fourth International. Sorry, I still think that Trotsky was right, despite the manifold errors and failures of the FI (which was almost automatically doomed to failure due to its extreme isolation, and the fact that it was, in reality, one man - Leon Trotsky). Incidentally, you mock the FI because it was so isolated. To be quite frank, I find that fairly baffling coming from a tiny, isolated group like yourself. Just because a person, or group, is isolated or universally ridiculed does not mean that they are wrong; sometimes quite the opposite is true. What about Copernicus, or Galileo, or Newton, or Darwin, or Einstein, or even Marx and Lenin?

If you look back at the Comintern's political record during the 1930s, it is undeniably appalling. Every revolutionary movement was sacrificed just so that the Stalinist bureaucracy could survive (instead of the other way around). It is not enough to criticise the Comintern for being "centrist" or for drifting towards the "right". A deeper explanation is urgently required. Look at Spain and Germany. In both cases the cynical and crass twists and turns of the Comintern directly facilitated the rise of fascism.

Now, you are quite right to point out that there is a world of difference

between the terms 'bureaucratic' and 'counterrevolutionary'. Exactly right. If that was not the case, the Soviet Union would have been counterrevolutionary from day one! Lenin, in 1921, described the Soviet Union as: "The workers' state is an abstraction. In reality we have a workers' state with the following peculiar features, (1) it is the peasants and not the workers who predominate in the population and (2) it is a workers' state with bureaucratic deformations."

It is just when the bureaucracy becomes so extensive, so all-pervasive, that it develops its own narrow sectional interests *above* those of the working class, when it becomes openly counterrevolutionary.

Eddie Ford
Cornwall

Trotsky

Mike Martin, in the letters page of the last issue, attempts a defence of Trotsky's 'anti-imperialism' in the context of the Gulf War, against comrade Paul Conlon's article 'Six Trotskyite myths scotched' (*The Leninist* No101). He cites a letter from Trotsky to the revolutionary artist, Diego Rivera, on Japan's invasion of China in the 30s as proof of the principled nature of the Trotsky's stance.

Having re-read both comrade Conlon's article and Trotsky's letter to Rivera, I believe I can only concur with the former.

Conlon's analogy between Iraq 1991 and China 1937 still stands, irrespective of the undoubted semi-colonial nature of China and imperialist nature of Japan at that time. Communists do not draw conclusions merely in the trite fashion of being able to stick a label on something; instead we must look at the dynamic of the class forces.

Conlon quotes Lenin: "as communists we will only support the bourgeois freedom movements in the colonial countries if these movements are really revolutionary and if their representatives are not opposed to us training and organising the peasantry in a revolutionary way" (*The Second Congress of the Communist International*, Vol 1, p111). Mike, do you really think that Chiang was "really revolutionary"; that the man who had left the streets of Shanghai littered with workers' decapitated heads in 1927 was "not opposed to us training and organising the peasantry in a revolutionary way"?

Trotsky's advocacy of unity with Chiang is no fiction of ours. In Trotsky's letter to Rivera, after stating that he has no illusions in Chiang, Trotsky writes: "But today he is forced, despite himself, to struggle against Japan for the remainder of the independence of China. Tomorrow he may again betray. It is possible. It is even probable. But today he is struggling. Only cowards, scoundrels, or complete imbeciles can refuse to participate in that struggle." (*Leon Trotsky on China*, p568). And Trotsky adds later *under Chiang Kai-shek's leadership*.

Trotsky goes on to deal with that hoary old favourite of his epigones today, 'military, not political, support': "In participating in the military struggle under the orders of Chiang Kai-Shek, since unfortunately it is he who has the command of the war for independence - to prepare *politically* the overthrow of Chiang Kai-shek ... that is the only revolutionary policy" (*Ibid*, p571, emphasis in original). This is a concept that is entirely absent from the writings of Marx and Lenin. To paraphrase Clausewitz, military support is political support by other, violent, means.

The defence that Mike raises, that Trotsky said this should be done without abandoning our independent programmes and activities, is just a fig leaf. How could it be anything else, subordinate to the butcher Chiang's command? Besides, not one of the 'victory to Iraq' brigade raises this slogan without similar provisos.

David Rhys
London

Walton

The following letter was sent to Lesley Mahmood by the Communist Party after the Walton by-election:

On behalf of the Provisional Central Committee of the Communist Party of Great Britain, I am writing to congratulate you and your team for your recent fight in the Walton by-election.

The decision of Broad Left to stand against the Kinnock imposed stooge was one that deserved the backing of every class conscious worker. Our organisation sent teams of canvassers to Walton to assist comrades canvassing for the 'Real Labour' ticket; we distributed 'Vote Mahmood' leaflets as well as our own literature calling for a vote against the bureaucrat stooge Kilfoyle; we opposed those in the workers' movement - *Socialist Organiser*, *Socialist Action*, Revolutionary Communist Party et al - who urged no support to Mahmood and thus, objectively, lined up with Kinnock.

Despite our many political differences, we would also like to take this opportunity to declare our solidarity with comrades in the Labour Party who face the threat of a purge in the aftermath of the Walton battle. Our organisation will do its utmost to ensure that while the likes of Kilfoyle and his goons may have won this battle, at the end of the day, we will win the war. This can only be done through re-forging the CPGB, a party that singlemindedly fights for revolution as opposed to reform, workers' councils as opposed to parliament and socialism as opposed to capitalism.

Yours in solidarity,
Mark Fischer
(for the Provisional Central Committee, CPGB)

Vanguards?

If I may, let me clarify one point for our friends in the *Open Polemic* home for weary has-beens. Alistair Parker (*The Leninist* No104-105 letters page) repeats the totally false charge that the majority of revolutionary political organisations in this country project themselves as the "vanguard".

To my knowledge, there are only in fact two organisations with such a stupid position - the weird International Communist Party, and its estranged parent, the discredited Workers Revolutionary Party (*Newsline*). The rest of the revolutionary left subscribe, in one form or another, to the correct idea that the revolutionary vanguard in this country needs to be organised, that a truly vanguard organisation does not yet exist.

Thus, *Open Polemic's* cynical sneering betrays two things.

First, for all their 'been there, done that' posturing, they are in fact profoundly ignorant of the actual politics of the British revolutionary left. Second, that the *OP* 'project' is not an honest one: rather it is a channel for certain disorientated elements to drop out of communist politics. Or as Alistair Parker so beautifully puts it - "I will willingly rejoin the organised communist movement once a single vanguard party has been formed".

Cheers, Alistair, that's a great help. We'll give you a ring, shall we?

Alec Long
London

Note: Letters have been shortened due to lack of space. For reasons of political security we have changed certain names, addresses and details.

WRITE OR RING

If you wish to reply to any of these letters, raise questions or comment on articles in *The Leninist*, please write to The Editor, BCM Box 928, London WC1N 3XX, or phone 071-431 3135.

What's in a name?

The *Morning Star* doesn't just censor its news, it censors its adverts too



Rosser: trying to win the vanguard by default through censorship

READERS of the charity mongering 'official communist' *Morning Star* who responded to the advert on May 25 and 27 for the new communist quarterly, the *International Information Bulletin*, will have been somewhat surprised when they received the first issue. They might well have thought they were buying a journal put together by communist organisations from three countries - Iran, Turkey and the USA - only to discover that there is a fourth organisation involved: the Provisional Central Committee of the Communist Party of Great Britain.

This was not us trying to pull a fast one. It was the *Morning Star* going in for censorship - showing yet again that it only pays lip service to glasnost, that it is afraid of the success and progress of genuine communists.

Under a heavy editorial hand, the *Morning Star*'s advertisement department unilaterally and clumsily cut out the words "Provisional Central Committee of the Communist Party of Great Britain" from the artwork we supplied. We rang the *Morning Star*'s advertising department:

Us: "Why did you change our advert? Surely the *Morning Star* has a duty to allow its readers to be informed about developments in the communist movement."

Them: "But the *Star* is no longer a communist paper."

Us: "That's true, but why change our advert?"

Them: "You see, the Provisional Central Committee is not an actual organisation; it doesn't really exist."

Us: "Of course it does!"

Them: "Well our legal adviser says we might be breaking the law if we print its name."

How you can fear legal action for printing the name of an organisation that apparently does not exist, and yet has as its central organ this paper, is more than just a conundrum. So we sent a written complaint to the *Morning Star*. Mary Rosser, Chief Executive

of the *Morning Star* Cooperative Society Ltd, replied (June 14 1991): "No organisation can claim the name of the Communist Party of Great Britain while that organisation exists - or if that name is incorporated into any new name which is agreed by that organisation. To do so is to invite litigation."

Frankly, for any sort of a communist this is dishonest.

1. There are many cases in the world of competing organisations in the working class movement using the same or similar names. Not only was there the Russian Social Democratic Labour Party, Bolshevik and Menshevik, but today there are two parties in the Philippines which call themselves the Communist Party; in Turkey we have the Communist Party of Turkey and the United Communist Party of Turkey; in India, Peru, Finland, the US and Britain there are similar situations.

2. If anyone is going to go for litigation it is, presumably, the Euros, who still call their organisation the Executive Committee of the CPGB. If they were going to go to court, again presumably, they would have done so long ago. As well as in *The Leninist*, our organisation has been reported in all sorts of journals, including the *New Statesman* and *Tribune*; and after a militant picket of the Euros' November 1990 congress, their own *Changes* carried a report, which yes spelt out the full name of our organisation. Why then take the *Morning Star* to court for printing an advert?

3. The so-called legal position is of little concern to us. We may have to take account of bourgeois law tactically, but in the long run we will destroy it along with the bourgeois state and replace it with proletarian law. We will certainly not let a bewigged judge dictate the name of our organisation.

Taking all this into account we would be only too happy if the Euro Executive Committee traitors opened legal proceedings against us, because this would facilitate a public debate as to who is and who is not communist. Having renounced their formal alle-

giance to communism unanimously in September 1990, their general secretary Nina Temple having publicly admitted that she was never a Marxist-Leninist despite it being in the rules of their organisation, what sort of a moral case do they have? None!

After all, their November 1990 congress, while rejecting all formal loyalty to communism, dishonestly took the advice of hatchet man and fixer Ian MacKay to postpone their name change for "technical reasons" - in other words, to retain their right to Communist Party property, still estimated at something like £2 million, and bequests from the wills of those communists who still remain faithful to this organisation, who do not realise that it has long since ceased to be the CPGB they joined.

In November 1990 the 5th Conference of the Leninists of the CPGB voted unanimously to take hold of the name Communist Party of Great Britain, a name that is rightly ours. To distinguish ourselves from the Euros and other opportunists and to indicate the stage we are at in the struggle to reforge our Party, we decided to call our leadership the Provisional Central Committee.

At the same time the conference instructed the Euro organisation to "hand over all Party property, files and records" (*The Leninist* No97). Of course, we will not go to the bourgeois courts to resolve any of these questions, but to the working class. They will be resolved in the course of the class struggle, in the course of the political struggle for the leadership of the class. In the end, the working class will have its undisputed genuine Communist Party, which will enable it to become conscious of its historical role, to become a class for itself.

The *Morning Star*'s supposed fear of being dragged before the courts is nonsense. It is using spurious legal 'advice' as an excuse for political censorship. It wants to hide from its readership the fact that the Provisional Central Committee even exists, and to pretend that its own Communist Party of Britain is the legitimate inheritor of the CPGB. Of course, this is contemptible but it is also futile.

Our organisation exists and is growing on the basis of defending and developing the principles upon which our Party was founded in July 1920: revolutionary principles utterly alien to the CPB, with its part time general secretary, its passive membership, its reformist *British Road to Socialism* and its sickening justifications for counter-revolution in the Soviet Union.

Readers of the *Morning Star* are not children, and if they are so treated, their low esteem for the paper can only get lower (a low esteem proved month after month by the failure of its fighting fund to reach target). They do not live cocooned from the real world and the political currents that are developing in it. Attempts to hide the truth can only backfire.

Stan Kelsey

IN STRUGGLE

Ten years ago Bobby Sands and nine of his IRA and Inla comrades died on hunger strike in Long Kesh. The hunger strikes were the culmination of five years of struggle against the ending of Special Category Political Status by the then Labour government, and the introduction of the policy of criminalisation. As a result of the ultimate sacrifices made by the 10 men, the British authorities eventually gave in to almost all of the prisoners' demands. Today many republicans are still being imprisoned. As the Public Relations Officer of republican prisoners in Crumlin Road Jail recently wrote, "the ANC, in its dispute with the racist apartheid regime, pointed out that it had 1,300 political prisoners in South Africa. I would like to point out that as of April 1991 there were 612 nationalist and republican political prisoners: 500 in the Six Counties, 70 in the Twenty-six counties and the rest overseas. I'd like to draw your attention to the contrast: South Africa has twice as many political prisoners, but from a population of 26 million. Republican prisoners are predominantly drawn from a population of 500,000." To commemorate the 10th anniversary of the hunger strike, Republican Socialist Prisoners Aid has organised a benefit social, with speakers and political stalls, to raise funds for republican and republican socialist prisoners: Friday July 26 1991 at the Emerald Centre, Hammersmith Broadway, London (Hammersmith tube). £3; £2 concessions. Music by Saoirse. Late bar & food. Proceeds to Green Cross and Republican Socialist Prisoners Aid. NC

A group of our comrades went to Liverpool to campaign for Lesley Mahmood in the Walton by-election. The main demand of Militant was for a "socialist Labour government", and opposition to poverty and the "scandalous" Labour council which allowed the bailiffs to seize people's belongings when they did not pay the poll tax. Mahmood campaign coordinator Richard Venton was clear and honest about the restrictions he had in mind for canvassers. This meant only Militant's arguments could be put. Our comrades had the same experience as other left organisations when they were ordered by the 'Real Labour' campaigners not to distribute their own literature while campaigning for Mahmood. Venton stated that the media would see the sale of our communist newspaper as 'a smear' on the campaign. CPGB comrades decided to leaflet with the Militant campaigners and then to work independently from them, so as to avoid their restrictions and to sell *The Leninist*.

One comrade was informed by a *Militant* seller that he was doing "more harm than good" because he openly said he was communist. The presence of the CPGB in Walton was important for two reasons: firstly to give critical support in the campaign for Mahmood against the overtly pro-poll tax, anti-strike Kilfoyle, and secondly to gain experience of constituency work for the four CPGB candidates in the general election. NP

The poll tax is dead: so trumpets the media and all the bourgeois politicians. Many thousands are taken in, and think the fight is over. But the tax isn't dead, it could be with us for two more years. Bills and summonses still drop through letterboxes in their tens of thousands. Magistrates' courts still steam-roller through penalties in hundreds at a time. Jailings are being stepped up. The sullen resentment and resistance of the working class still simmers like a sleeping volcano. Militant and the SWP, parents of the active resistance, have all but given up the fight. Militant, when it does campaign, propagandises about poverty, not politics, and demobilises its forces in the Anti-Poll Tax Unions. But there is resistance, in pockets, up and down the country - uncoordinated and unled, without any clear political objectives. An attempt to remedy this will be the national meeting of Anti-Poll Tax Delegates at Manchester Town Hall from 2pm to 6pm on Sunday July 14. The meeting - open to all APT organisations - is sponsored by APTUs in London, Yorkshire, the North West, Bristol and the South West, and Scotland. The object is to organise a National Conference in the autumn under the slogan: "finishing off the poll tax". Information about the July meeting and the autumn conference from: NW APT Forum, PO Box 9, Eccles, Salford, M30. HE

Laser Technology



The fighting fund for July has got off to a slow start. So far we have received £107, thanks to comrades KC, LA, AS and DD. Readers will be aware that £600 is needed each month to cover production costs for *The Leninist*. However, this month there will be an extra bill to pay. To improve the computer system in our editorial office we have placed an order for a laser printer. This will be used to speed up production, helping to achieve a regular fortnightly paper. It will also be a vital part of our general election machine, when we are aiming to produce the *Daily Worker* in support of the communist campaign and the four communist candidates. Let's have an extra push and see if we can bust the target this month.

Vernon Douglas
Fund Organiser

Kinnock's Labour Party Preparing for Power

With the Tories
and the economy
in crisis the
bosses are turning
to their second
eleven



The city brokers' favourite 'socialist'

THE LABOUR PARTY is once more a credible party" notes the *Financial Times* in an editorial. It goes on to say that "The question is no longer whether Labour can be taken seriously. It is whether its current merits are more than the absence of its past defects? The answer is 'yes', but not decisively so" (June 11 1991).

Clearly the British ruling class is preparing itself for the possibility of Labour winning the next general election. While the Tories remain the bourgeoisie's preferred party of government, the alternative offered by Kinnock now holds few if any real fears for them. Far from warning the establishment of the impending socialist disaster that is about to engulf them, authoritative journals such as the *Financial Times* and *The Economist* now fill many column inches with constructive criticism of Labour policies.

The British bourgeoisie is engaged in fine-tuning the Labour Party's programme to suit its needs, its priorities for the coming decade. The cautious optimism the ruling class expresses in the performance of a future Labour government should act as a strident alarm to the working class. Between them, the bourgeoisie and Labour Party policy makers are hammering out a programme for class war against the workers in the 1990s.

Labour dynamism

Before we look at the bosses' evaluations of the

Kinnock molded Labour Party, it is worthwhile asking ourselves a few questions. Most importantly, we must explain why Labour went into the political wilderness in the first place? And then, how did it become electable again? If we just correlate the ebb and flow of bourgeois politics with the timing of various general elections - the winter of discontent (1979), the stigma of a dithering, aged leader at the time of the Falklands war (1983), vacuous policies which manifestly attempted simply to steal Tory clothes (1987) - we do not really cut to the heart of the matter.

The Labour Party's currently revived fortunes can only be properly understood in the context of a correct definition of the Labour Party as a political entity.

Since its inception, this paper has defended the definition of Labour first advanced by Lenin himself in a polemical exchange with communists in Britain. Despite noting the fact that "most of the Labour Party's members are workingmen", Lenin was absolutely clear in pinpointing the nature of the organisation as "a thoroughly bourgeois party because, although made up of workers, it is led by reactionaries, and the worst kind of reactionaries at that ... It is an organisation of the bourgeoisie which exists to systematically dupe the workers" (CW, Vol 31, pp257-258).

Thus, by definition, Labour is a contradictory party. Despite Clause 4, despite the Herculean efforts of the Labour left over the years, despite Militant's heartfelt appeals to the traditions of "Real Labour", this party has always been committed body and soul to the interests and prosperity of

British imperialism. Yet given its nature as a 'workers' party' with the majority of the organised working class in Britain actually affiliated to it, it also must appear to defend working class interests in some way.

The role of the left and right in such a political formation is therefore symbiotic, no matter how bitter and protracted their internecine scraps. The right wing of the party presents the 'moderate', 'sensible' and fiercely national face that makes Labour an electable alternative as far as bourgeois opinion is concerned. On the other hand, the left has historically presented a radical reforming face, with a more expressly 'class' appeal. This has helped anchor the Labour Party's working class electoral base, particularly in times of mass struggles and radicalisation that might otherwise have bypassed the party altogether.

As we noted in an article in 1985, this understanding "puts the seemingly never-ending seesawing between left and right in the party in its proper context: seesaws do not work, after all, unless there are two people on opposite ends" (*The Leninist*, No 23, August 1985).

As Britain, along with the rest of the capitalist world, moved from boom to slump from the late 1960s onwards, the strains began to tell on the Labour Party and on this treacherous dual role. The 1979 general election, fought after Labour had viciously attacked working class living standards and used troops

to break strikes in the so-called 'winter of discontent', brought matters to a head. Predictably, with its proletarian electoral base thoroughly alienated, Labour lost.

The important political phenomenon known as Bennism emerged around this time, largely as a response to the shabby experience of 'moderate', rightwing Labour in power over the previous period. Benn himself unconsciously described the responsive nature of his movement (which succeeded, if nothing else, in convincing large swathes of the Trotskyite left that their place was inside Her Majesty's loyal opposition): "If you look at the defeat of the Labour Party government in May 1979, the more I think about it, the more I think it was a surrender rather than a defeat. For 25 years non-political trade unionism had been preached and it turned out to be a cul-de-sac, and non-socialist Labourism had been preached and it also turned out to be a cul-de-sac." (Interview with Eric Hobsbawm, *Marxism Today*, October 1980).

The 'flipside' of the leftwing Bennite movement, the other end of the 'seesaw', was the political tendency that later became the Social Democratic Party. In the aftermath of the rightwing Wilson Callaghan Labour administrations of the 60s and 70s, this trend was one to which many, if not the majority, of Labour Party activists were deeply hostile.

Thus, it was the experience of rightwing Labour in government during a period of Britain's increasing economic stagnation that led to a 'wobble' in

the relationship between left and right in the party and the rise of a serious challenge from the left in the form of the Bennite movement. This 'wobble' in turn precipitated the defection of a section of the right wing of the party in the shape of the SDP, formed in March 1981.

While the SDP, even in alliance with the Liberals, never had a chance of forming a government, it did ensure that the Labour Party became unelectable throughout the 1980s. With its espousal of 'non-class', 'moderate' politics, the SDP struck a chord with deep resonance in British bourgeois political consciousness and was able to rob Labour of a whole mass of supporters and voters. Labour's pretensions to being the *natural* party of government were smashed.

For a variety on interrelated reasons, Kinnock's subsequent dynamic drive to turn the Labour Party back into a respectable, modernist alternative party of capitalist government - despite setback - has been highly successful. Today, the Labour Party has re-integrated into its base of potential electoral support those skilled workers who defected to the Tories or Liberals after being alienated from the 'extremist' Labour Party in the early '80s. "The message is that we are the good managers now," one Labour insider claimed this week. "It is up to the Tories to fight their way back to the centre ground we are now occupying." (*Financial Times*, May 11-12). More than that, as evidenced by the tone and content of much authoritative comment on the Labour Party in the quality bourgeois press, Kinnock's party is now an acceptable alternative to the Tories as far as the British imperialist bourgeoisie is concerned.

Sizing Labour up

The High Tory *Economist* (May 18-24) advises Kinnock in a lead article on "how to win". Its analysis is fairly typical of current bourgeois opinion on the Labour Party, so it is worth looking at in some detail.

First, it underlines the extent of the success of the Kinnock project inside the party. Labour has "purged" the "humiliations and disgraces of the 1970s" and "has reformed itself almost out of recognition". Almost, but not quite.

In the view of *The Economist*, "far from reforming itself too much, Labour's rethinking has not gone far enough." The problem remains, apparently, of "sinewy old dogmas ... strangling new thinking." More explicitly, *The Economist* believes that Labour must make even plainer its willingness to attack working class living standards, to make the proletariat culpable for the developing crisis of British imperialism.

The Economist underlines essentially the same point that the Tories have made in a rather tired propaganda campaign against the Labour Party that has adorned billboards up and down the country: even the painfully modest promises Labour offers the working class are vulnerable to the parlous state of the British economy. "When the Conservatives counterattack by saying that Labour's sums do not add up, they strike a chord", *The Economist* reckons. The key question, it goes on, is whether "Labour ... [would] raise the £20 billion it says it needs for its social programmes without damaging the economy" (for the "the economy", of course, read the profit rates of the British bourgeoisie).

More explicitly, *The Economist*, along with the rest of the ruling class, wants to be assured that Labour will spend their money "wisely", that is "buying changes that produce better services, even when they hurt state employees". Put crudely, what is still lacking is the total confidence of the bourgeoisie that Labour would make "changes [that] would hurt many of its traditional backers and some of its oldest friends. But [this] would make the party electable. And - which matters far more - it would ensure that Labour became effective in government."

Who can doubt that the Labour Party under Kinnock will be prepared to put the ruling class' collective mind at rest? Certainly not *The Economist*, which elsewhere in the same issue produces an ideal manifesto for "a modern, British, left of centre party whose programme for the 1990s is not merely good enough to win a general election, but might actually help the country. We call this new force the Labour Party." With this 'imaginary' manifesto the *FT* concludes explicitly that "Labour is the right way forward for Britain."

What persists as a nagging doubt for the British establishment is Labour's continued relationship to the trade unions - the party's "oldest friends", as *The Economist* coyly puts it. The controversy the party has generated for itself around its eminently modest proposals for a minimum wage and the new TUC draft proposals on statutory recognition rights for unions is an illustration of Labour's dilemma.

On the national minimum wage, Labour proposes an increase to two thirds of average male earnings from an initial level of half average male earnings. To the embarrassment of the party tops, and in particular Tony Blair the shadow employment

spokesman, this has provoked what a *Financial Times* editorial dubbed a "burst of argument between the craft union leaders, who oppose Labour's statutory minimum wage policy, and the leaders of public sector unions who support it" (*Financial Times*, June 28).

Lining up with the "craft union leaders" are journals like the *Financial Times* and *The Economist*, which point to a supposed contradiction between Labour's "claim that it will both reduce unemployment and introduce a job-destroying minimum wage" (*The Economist*, May 18-24). Labour thus attempts to placate everyone - 'we will introduce a minimum wage', they promise, 'but not for a long time'.

"Mr Tony Blair, the shadow employment secretary ... refused to elaborate on the timing of Labour's commitment to increase a national minimum wage ... 'We don't have an optimum timescale,' he said at a Westminster press conference. 'There are other countries that apply two thirds. Over time we want to move to it, but we've made it absolutely clear that it must depend on the circumstances of the economy'" (*Financial Times*, June 25).

The introduction of an increased minimum wage is therefore *conditional* on the complimentary introduction of "training and other measures" (*Ibid*), which is in its turn all dependent on the "circumstances" of the rundown and decrepit British economy. In other words, no one should hold their breath.

Kinnock's revived party, given its continued relationship to the trade union bureaucracy and its different social base to the Tories, must perform this type of painful balancing act in order to survive.

Sign of the Times

Probably the most authoritative bourgeois assessment of the 'new model Labour Party' has been offered in a series of seven editorial surveys of different aspects of the party's policy that appeared in the *Financial Times* from May 20 to June 11.

They set out to answer "a series of core questions" about the Labour Party: "... does Labour offer a fundamental change and, if so, with what justification? Can Labour's policies be financed? Are its objectives politically plausible, given the party's links with and sympathies for various interest groups? Does Labour plan to take advantage of the market or, rhetoric notwithstanding, to override it?" (*Financial Times*, May 20).

We will briefly outline the main conclusions of the *Financial Times* series on each aspect of Labour policy surveyed. From our summary, readers will see the similar themes of cautious optimism and constructive advice emerge.

● "Labour and the Economy" - *Financial Times*, May 20 1991

"Elections", states this editorial in a rather angular fashion, "are above all about the economy". Can the Labour Party convince the electorate that it can manage British capitalism better - or at least no worse - than the Tories? "It has a good chance of doing so." Indeed, none of the Kinnock team's "macroeconomic intentions" can in any way be "judged wild". In fact, "with its commitment to disinflation, its abandonment of fiscal fine-tuning, its devotion to ERM membership and its desire for credit management, the Labour Party looks a convincing exponent of the hair-shirt school of modern European socialism." Labour's ominous promise that "We will not spend, nor will we promise to spend, more than Britain can afford" is cited positively.

Labour's proposals are estimated to take public spending up to about 42.5% of GDP, 2 percentage points more than now. But then, as the *Financial Times* points out, this simply takes this figure back "to where it was in 1987-88, under what Labour condemned as the outrageously stingy Margaret Thatcher."

Worries remain that in the field of the economy, "Labour, in short, promises to be nanny ... but at least nanny promises to be prudent."

● "Labour and Industry" - *Financial Times*, May 24 1991

While noting that Labour has striven hard to create a new image as "the friend of business", that "it has learned to live with capitalism", the *Financial Times* sees less here to be positive about, although its conclusions are far from damning.

Specifically, it suggests that Labour's 'conversion' has less to do with a fundamental shift, and more to do with the recognition of "practical restraints. Privatisation has gone too far to be wholly reversed on other than confiscatory terms. [Hardly a likely scenario! - IM] The scope for intervention in industry is increasingly circumscribed by tough competition and merger rules enforced by Brussels."

Thus, the constraints have led the party to con-

centrate on "broader priorities", many of which are "shared by the Confederation of British Industry". Training and education is mentioned in this context; but there is a sting in the tail. As the *Financial Times* points out, there is a contradiction lodged in Labour's policy prescriptions: "Upgrading education and infrastructure is a long-term challenge. It is also hugely expensive. Yet a fiscally responsible Labour government would have limited extra resources to play with - and many competing claims on them."

● "Labour's constitution" - *Financial Times*, May 30 1991

Here, the *Financial Times* suggests, "Labour is on the right road", but "its actual proposals leave much to be desired." Labour's move from any notion of class based 'rights' to the explicitly bourgeois conception of 'citizen rights' is perfectly sincere, however.

"Labour's change of heart is no will-o'-the-wisp: it mirrors a shift within other European socialist parties in recent years, where virtually without exception 'democratic centralism' [!] has yielded to a constitutionalism based on rights, decentralisation and the division of power. The process has gone hand in hand with the conversion to market economics". And who could now question Labour's commitment to that?

● "Labour's labour market" - *Financial Times*, June 3 1991

Unsurprisingly, the fraught area of Labour's relationship with the organised working class is the one that worries the establishment the most. True, it concedes, "Labour has ambitious plans for reform of the labour market ... [designed to] engender a skilled, employed, competitive, highly-paid and strike free workforce, while containing wage inflation." But, realistically, this would be "a hard enough trick for a party that did not have its historic links with the trades unions". Concretely, Labour must convince them that there will be "no return to mass picketing and public sector unrest."

The credibility of the 'positive' aspects of Labour's policies that the bourgeoisie sees hinge on this question, for "these fears must be dispelled if [Labour's] talk of a partnership with employers and all employees is to be more than mere rhetoric." On the 'positive' side, Labour does accept the Tory restrictions on trade unions which stipulate that they "must operate within a clear legal framework. Compulsory ballots before strike action will stay; the closed shop will not return. There will also be a limited right to secondary action, though the party should draw the limit more tightly."

Still though, this authoritative journal of the bourgeoisie sees "a broad seam of undue union influence [running] through Labour's policy for the labour market ... the most worrying concession to union pressure [being] the proposed enforcement of union recognition in companies where an unspecified number of workers are union members."

This they see simply as a "sop" to the declining general unions, in much the same way as Labour's vague and timeless proposals for a minimum wage (see above) are "designed to buy the support of public sector unions".

Labour needs to make its relationship to the unions a more "distant one". They need to be shown who is boss "often and forcibly".

Interestingly though, this editorial is at pains to *balance* its criticisms of the Labour Party's relationship to the trade unions: "Labour has a long way to go. For the first time, it shows the potential to be part of the solution to Britain's labour market problems rather than a major part of the problem. But it must break far more decisively with the union's sectional demands."

Workers should consider it instructive that the ruling class considers Kinnock's Labour 'part of the solution' to the union problem in Britain.

"Labour's education" - *Financial Times*, June 4 1991

Could do better, admonishes the *Financial Times*. "Labour does speak sense in some areas", but its programme remains "a mixture of worthy aspirations and unconvincing means of achieving them." In particular, "it wishes", it says, "to abolish student loans ... without pledging (because it cannot) state finance for the massive expansion Labour proposes."

Similarly, Labour suggests that "employers of school leavers will be legally bound to provide a minimum level of 'structured training' ... But, allied to Labour's plans for a minimum wage", the *Financial Times* says this will "drive employers away from hiring school leavers and exacerbate already high levels of youth unemployment."

The more the details of sops like the minimum wage proposals are examined, the more it becomes clear that they will be inoperable in practice by a Labour Party unequivocally committed to the prosperity of British imperialism.

"Labour and the World" - *Financial Times*, June 7 1991

Britain's reputation as a solid and reliable bastion of bourgeois reaction will hardly be dented by the election of a Labour government, suggests this editorial. Indeed, "a more dramatic change in British politics, as seen by the outside world, occurred last November" with the removal of Thatcher. Even in 1987, "serious doubts remained, especially in Washington, about the strength of Labour's commitment to western defence."

But "since then, the geo-political context has changed so radically that such doubts have come to seem almost irrelevant." Labour's loyalty to Nato, to British imperialism's independent nuclear 'deterrent', to the EC "are no longer in doubt", and in practice "there is little to choose ... between the two main parties."

The only area where the *Financial Times* sees a problem is in "promises to implement the Social Charter in full, to accept majority voting on social and environmental issues, and to 'create an industrial and regional policy.'" These proposals, apparently, place constraints on "economic activity and the extension of consumer choice."

The *Financial Times* congratulates Labour on 'sloughing off' the 'socialist dogmas', left reformist shibboleths such as "nationalisation ... the welcome ... given to every policy sought by the union barons" ... hostility to the European Community ... unilateralism" (*Financial Times*, June 11). Labour is "now a better managed and more obviously modern European democratic socialist party than it has ever been" (*Ibid*). Today, the Labour Party "may not have the right answers, but it is asking the right questions."

We started this article with the observation that the cautious optimism which the bourgeoisie invests in Labour should act as a stark warning to the working class. Labour proclaims woefully modest aims within the framework of capitalism that even the likes of *The Economist* and *Financial Times* tick off as 'conservative' or 'too limited'. Yet, at the same time, Kinnock and his team are at pains to link these aims to the state of the British economy, to make them conditional on the profitability of the shaky British economy.

Complementing this, they are already eagerly pointing out the dire state of the British economy. For example, Gordon Brown, Labour's shadow trade and industry secretary, writing in the *Financial Times* of May 1, underlines the fact that "at the end of 12 years of Conservative government we have had the worst series of trade deficits in our history, a contraction of industrial capacity as Britain slips further behind, and now the fastest rising unemployment in Western Europe."

These dire (and largely accurate) overviews of the British economy perform a dual function. Naturally, they are a useful stick with which to beat the Tories. More than that though, they are a means by which a party which has already made its modest plans dependent on "What Britain can afford" *alibis itself in advance* for delivering *nothing* to the working class apart from attacks on our living standards and rights at home, and imperialist reaction abroad.

Summarising all of this, we can say:

1. Those workers who will vote Labour, and there will be millions of them, will entertain no illusions as to the 'socialist' nature of Kinnock's party. They will, however, falsely hope that Labour will run capitalism in a 'fairer', more 'social' way than the Tories.
2. The only element of the Labour Party which maintains any vestige of 'socialism' is the left, not least the Trotskyite entrists.
3. Workers' illusions in the 'fairer' nature of Labour, coupled with the potentially treacherous role of the likes of Militant, mean that this party could present a greater danger to the working class than the Tories.
4. The key question, therefore, is not who wins the next general election, but rather the state of combat readiness of our class. This is expressed most clearly in the state of communist organisation in this country, which remains frustratingly weak.
5. Calls to vote Labour under these circumstances can only strengthen dangerous illusions and undermine the fight for a genuine reformed Communist Party. It is the task of communists to ruthlessly expose the threat Labour poses to our class and to link that exposure to *practical, political* moves.
6. The only justifiable call in the forthcoming general election, therefore, is for a vote for the candidates of the Provisional Central Committee of the Communist Party of Great Britain - in the four constituencies which the Party is contesting; and elsewhere, the standing of workers' candidates on a basic programme of defence of our class, or, where this is not possible, the defacing of ballot papers with the word "communist".

As we have seen, the bourgeoisie has few fears of a Labour government: the working class, on the other hand, should start to prepare its defences now.

Ian Mahoney



OUR HISTORY

Paul against affiliation

The formation of the CPGB and its early years: documents, resolutions and manifestos



Many communists were repulsed at affiliation to the recruiting sergeants for the trenches

The 'respectable' bourgeois papers bare their fangs on occasion. An editorial comment in the Sunday Telegraph of June 23 was headlined: "When attack is the police duty". It referred to the compensation awarded to the Orgreave miners, and says "what now seems clear is that the police ... went on the offensive and got their blows in first ... To us it seems more a cause for congratulation than concern". The editorial continues: "To all intents and purposes, Arthur Scargill was leading an insurrection ... Given such high stakes, there could be no question of the police reacting with exactly the right kind of force" With shades of Peterloo, it continues: "It was tragic on this occasion that the police, owing to Mr Scargill's belligerency, had to fill the old role of the militia". Which all goes to show that there is bound to be more to come - and that we need our own militia against it.

There's no doubt the bourgeoisie is fed up with faction-fighting Tories and that Labour is coming to be seen as a safe alternative by the City and the CBI, as recent bourgeois press coverage has made clear. In the New Statesman, Harry Phibbs, once wild teenager of the Young Conservatives and enfant terrible of Thatcherism (shades of Tory contributors to Marxism Today) makes the position clear. He suggests "a sinister fifth column has spread through the Conservative Party: 'Tories for a Kinnock Victory' may have no committee, office, or letterhead, but it does exist as an attitude of mind ... Naturally, no Thatcherite could be entirely pleased about the effects of a Labour government, but as one put it to me, 'It's not as if they would threaten the British way of life ... If Labour were elected now, scarcely anyone would notice the difference'."

That "vessel for your thoughts", Open Polemic, has a correspondence page that is positively scintillating. They feel the need to reveal the low-down, the nitty gritty of their everyday organisation. Just to wet your appetites, here is a small sample from their 'open polemic' with the Communist Party of Britain: "Please supply credentials for three representatives of OP to the conference. Also if possible we would like a small space within the hall to distribute our material. A table 2ft by 2ft (which we can supply if necessary) would be sufficient for our purposes." There are some matters that are just too important to omit!

DEBATE around affiliation to the Labour Party was the most controversial at the Communist Unity Convention (later known as the CPGB's 1st Congress). After the speech of comrade JF Hodgson for Proposition A, ie "That the Communist Party shall be affiliated to the Labour Party", the chair, Arthur MacManus, called on comrade William Paul - a leading member of the Socialist Labour Party and a member of the Provisional Executive Committee of the CPGB - to speak for Proposition B, "That the Communist Party shall not be affiliated with the Labour Party." This is an edited version of his speech:

Mr Chairman and comrades, we hope that we shall be able to emulate the good spirit that Hodgson has put into the debate, and we will assure him that we do not intend to use Lenin as a bludgeon. [News of Lenin's support for CPGB affiliation at the 2nd Congress of the Communist International was filtering through]. We will meet our comrade with argument.

Taking the case of Lenin, it is quite true that Lenin has written a book entitled *Infant Disorders of Left Wing Communists*, and I think if our comrade were to hear some of the arguments put forward by some of our moderate friends, he might be tempted to write another book on the disorders of the senile decay elements. Let that pass. There is not one in the audience to whom I yield in admiration for Lenin, but, as we said yesterday, Lenin is no pope or god.

The point is that, so far as we are concerned, on international tactics we will take our international position from Moscow, where they can be verified internationally; but on local circumstances, where we are on the spot, we are the people to decide. Not only so, but our comrade Lenin would not have us slavishly accept everything which he utters in Moscow. The very warp and woof of our propaganda is criticism, and as we believe in criticism we are not above criticising Lenin. Wherever we find our comrade Lenin speaking on points regarding the Labour Party, we should remember what our delegates from the BSP said a few weeks ago in *The Call* [paper of the British Socialist Party - the organisation with most delegates to the Communist Unity Convention]. They had to admit so far as the Labour Party and its structure was concerned, Lenin was a little vague. No doubt that is why

they are able to quote him this morning as they have done.

What comrades who are in favour of Labour Party affiliation have to prove is their argument, no matter who says it. What is the position?

Capitalism is collapsing in every one of its institutions. It is collapsing most conspicuously in the parliamentary institution, and yesterday we passed a resolution in favour of parliamentary action; but not in the spirit that our comrade Hodgson would have us imply. When we declared for parliamentary action yesterday, this conference put behind every argument in favour of participating in parliamentary action, this fact - that we believe in parliamentary action for the express and decisive purpose of destructive and agitational work.

The Labour Party does not believe in that conception of parliamentary action; the Labour Party believes in parliamentary action as a constructive weapon in the working class movement, and in so far as the two functions are diametrically opposed they cannot be mixed, and he who will mix them is going to place himself in the delightful position of the acrobat who tries to stand on horses running in different directions. Not only are the two functions diametrically opposed in regard to parliamentary action, but it is not two functions only; it is two principles. It is the principle of the Second International, to which it is logically affiliated, which is the principle of the Labour Party; whereas we stand on the other side in favour of the Third International; who use the parliamentary weapon for destructive and agitational purposes.

Hodgson made a good point. He said that we have got to understand that we are dealing with an enemy who is keen, that this enemy has only two methods of trying to beat us down; that he tries to meet us with a brutal frontal attack, which he does not care to begin on just at once, until he has exhausted another method. That other method is the method of compromise, the flank movement or camouflage. Where do we stand? We find that the British ruling class in this country, above all classes, has made its inroads, has opposed every movement of revolt in this country, not by a fair frontal attack, but by the insidious and slimy method of trying to get underneath it, and thereby to eradicate it.

We have to realise that the capitalist class, economically living by swindling, also hopes to live and maintain its class rule by politically swindling

us. Jeremy Diddlers alike on the economic and political fields, the capitalist class internationally - in every country where there has been a crisis - the position has been that confronted with the crisis they did not first of all try to smash the revolutionary class, but tried to gather the moderate elements, to compromise with them and to throw the responsibility of diddling the working class upon these elements.

Therefore you find that in Russia - and Hodgson admitted that he hoped for it very quickly here - when the crisis took place it automatically produced Kerensky, [a member of the Socialist Revolutionary Party] and, when Kerensky could not solve the problem, Komiloff [the Tsarist general who led an attempted coup against Kerensky's provisional government and later a commander in the White armies]. The same thing applied in Germany. With the crisis Scheidemann and Noske [social democrats who supported German imperialism during World War I] were called into being, and behind that came the assassination of Rosa Luxemburg and Karl Liebknecht. In France, during the period of crisis, there were brought into being the Albert Thomases, Briands, Millerands. We find the same thing in Italy. The middle class look to this party which will mislead the working class. So, in America, your Spargos and Hillquits were called statesmen while Eugene Debs was put into gaol.

Come to Britain. We find here that the crisis is going to produce exactly the same results. We can go back to 1914, and what was it that the capitalist class was afraid of in 1914 when they declared their war? It was the working class. It was this working class political expression; and it was this Parliamentary Labour Party that let the working class treacherously down. Our friends say you can easily explain this.

You can if you are trained in the subtle method which our friends revel in, but the working class do not possess the subtle method. They judge us by the company we keep, and in the moment of crisis, when the indignant masses rise to sweep the Labour Party away, we may be swept away too. We shall we swept away too; because, when we tell the working class that we knew this all the time, but that we were playing a long game called tactics, the working class will not understand these methods of dissimulation.

The working class will say, "If you knew and did not tell us, you ought to be damned thirty times over." We find that in 1914, when the crisis took place,

it was the Labour Party that let the working class down. Even when they wanted some slimy individual to come along and diddle the soldiers out of their pensions, the Labour Party produced Mr John Hodge. That is why to our friends of the anti-parliamentary group yesterday, when they told us the fight was ineffectual in Gorton, we said it was not ineffectual in so far as it helped to expose Hodge. If this vote for affiliation to the Labour Party is carried we shall not be able to fight and expose Hodge. We shall be tied down.

The same thing is true in regard to food control. Food control has become the capitalist class method of blockading the working class during a strike. When the South Wales miners exposed Rhondda to whom did the capitalist class look? Was it not to JR Clynes? Now we are at the point of success in this country so far as building up a left wing revolutionary movement is concerned, we shall find that the capitalist class will become ever more intent in trying to diddle us, ever more intent to try to win us into the Labour Party, in order to try and disarm us.

Our friend tells us we ought to be in the Labour Party because that is where the working class is, but if our friend goes to anti-socialist demonstrations or conferences, these claim to represent the working class, and every argument he can put forward to show why we ought to be affiliated to the Labour Party can be applied to joining the Salvation Army. You will find then that we have got to build up our own organisation, that we have got to set out our own code of tactics, and that we have got to develop these - not that we shall be so much left that the battalions will be left behind. What battalions will be left behind?

When the crisis comes the battalions to be left behind will be the Labour Party, and the further we are away from the Labour Party, then the better for us. Comrade Hodgson, in the argument he was putting forward was impelled to say, despite himself, the way the fight can be fought by us, when he inadvertently admitted that it was in the workshop; and, although we believe in parliamentary action, we have shown that its function is of a destructive character, and, if you like, we can point out when the crisis comes, and the Labour Party is exposed, and the vortex of revolution, instead of sweeping us into the Labour Party and drowning us - at that moment we can tell the working class we were opposed to these people, and that in every demand for higher wages we were in every one of these struggles.

Therefore the working class will be compelled to look to us, and will come our way, because they will see that right through all the struggles we were the people who stood with the weapon clean in the hand of the Communist Party, and refused to violate fundamental principles by joining the Labour Party and indirectly joining the Second International.

In this fight our friends may imagine, if this demand is carried, to attract certain elements to the Communist Party. But we tell you that the elements attracted by passing the Labour Party affiliation clause will repel the people we want ...

We have realised during the past that all the great vigour and enthusiasm of our movement has been throttled by compromise. Let us throttle that spirit now. Let us build up the Communist Party and carry on its own work, merging in all the struggles of the masses. In that way we can reach the working class - but not by hauling our colours down and joining hands with Thomas and Co, who will ultimately betray us.

Godsend

Alan Bleasdale, *GBH*, Channel 4

ALAN BLEASDALE has enjoyed a thoroughly undeserved reputation of being some sort of a partisan of the working class. After the screening of his TV plays *Boys from the Black Stuff* and *The Monocled Mutineer* the Tory press pigeonholed him as a so-called 'Marxist millionaire'. With the £6 million *GBH* he has clearly scotched notions that he ever had any sympathy with Marxism and the organised working class, though he might have nudged into the ranks of the mildly rich.

If you believed in the conspiracy theory of politics - which we do not, but Bleasdale does - Channel 4's scheduling of *GBH* was obviously part of a master plan hatched by dark forces. *GBH* and the run up to the Walton by-election dovetailed perfectly and provided a wonderful cudgel for Kinnock to bash Militant and then in turn the Tories to bash Labour.

Of course, it was purely coincidental. Nonetheless Bleasdale's *GBH* does in many senses act as a social marker, showing just how far British society in general and the intelligentsia in particular has shifted to the right.

Bleasdale has never shown the slightest understanding of collective working class action or working class politics. How can he? He is a self confessed non-joiner who actually *boasts* that he has never studied Marx. No, for all his working class and professional Liverpoolian 'credentials' this genteel resident of genteel Sefton Park is a typical representative of the ivory tower literati. No wonder throughout his writing career he has placed at the centre of his drama the individual, the individual who is often isolated, often deeply flawed ... often deranged.

The mass is hardly ever considered. When it is, it is treated with undisguised contempt. It is always portrayed as undifferentiated, *male* and passive, only there to be manipulated. It is easily swayed by the demagogue and votes with unthinking unanimity and simple minded rapture. There are no contradictions, no genuine dialogue.

In the early 1980s the typical Bleasdale character was the pathetic Yasser Hughes of *Boys of the Black Stuff* fame. He and his mates were victims of Thatcherism and capitalism. But they resisted. True, this only took the form of fiddling the system, however it was resistance.

Things have changed. Nineteen eighties disorientation has given way to a period of reaction: to working class defeat in Britain has been added international counterrevolution. The idea of socialism, the historic mission of the working class, now seems to stand finally discredited. Those who lack a clear scientific ideology cannot but be swept along by the resulting rightist current.

In the 1990s Bleasdale's characters seem to be lifted from the pages of *The Sun*, given a Dickensian twist and then placed into a plot that could be pure 1950s Hollywood - though it owes more to the *Manchurian Candidate* than straight McCarthyism.

Instead of the ultra right being a front for the KGB, in Bleasdale's world it is the left which is made into a front for M15.

GBH is based squarely on the 1983-87 events in Liverpool. The off the wall, chauffeur driven Michael Murray is Derek Hatton; the lisping, hard drinking, public school educated, Trotskyite Melvin Sloan is Ted Grant; and his lieutenant, the sinister, cool and calculating (special branch agent) Lou Barnes is Peter Taaffe.

It is all rather crude, rather tiresome, rather inverted. The left (manipulated by the establishment, of course) is responsible for attacking blacks in an effort to trigger race riots; the left terrorises disturbed children and then shakes the hand of the police (with whom it is on first name terms).

The Labour left is corrupt, hypocritical, cowardly and cynical; the labour right is honest, brave, foolhardy, warm and endearingly naive.

There is no need to refute such *Alice through the Looking Glass* politics. What is significant is, firstly, the universal acclaim with which *GBH* has been greeted by critics in the bourgeois press and, secondly, the response of the Labour Party leadership.

Frankly, in spite of pots of money, really good actors and the unexpected relevance given to it by poor old Eric Heffer kicking the bucket, *GBH* is dramatically wooden and politically imbecilic. The only reason it has not been panned is because it is so useful to the enemies of the working class.

Both the tabloids and the so-called serious press were full of Bleasdale and *GBH*. So much for their objectivity when it comes to art.

As to the Labour right, Neil Kinnock seized upon it. He wanted to solicit the support of Michael Palin (who plays Jim Nelson, the right wing Labourite hero of *GBH*) in the Walton by-election. Only after being told that this would leave his party open to an action under the Representation of the Peoples' Act did he drop the idea. No surprise then to learn that Militant's former hero, Hatton, considered an injunction on *GBH* because it might prejudice the forthcoming trial he is facing on charges of corruption.

David Sherriff

African Renegade

South African Communist Party, *The African Communist* No124, first quarter 1991, pp68

THE SOUTH African Communist Party's high standing in the African National Congress was illustrated in the latter's recent much publicised leadership elections. According to the bourgeois press, about half of the 50 directly elected members of the new 90 strong national executive are SACP members.

There can be no doubt about the popularity of its leaders. For example SACP member Chris Hani, chief of staff of *Umkhonto we Sizwe*, the armed wing of the ANC, came top of the poll and Joe Slovo, its general secretary, came third. This will be taken by some as a guarantee that the revolution in South Africa is in safe hands. If only it were.

Slovo is not paying lip service to the prevailing rightist wind coming from Moscow while actually carrying out a revolution in practice. Slovo and the SACP are rapidly shifting from left centrism to right centrism. No one in its leadership now talks about uninterrupted revolution and insurrection. Instead they put socialism off the agenda 'for the time being' and place their faith in negotiations with de Klerk on a post-apartheid constitution.

This has earned warm praise from the enemy. The *Financial Times*, for example, notes with satisfaction the "signs of maturity in the ANC" (July 8). For revolutionaries and communists in South Africa such pats on the back should act as a serious warning and confirmation that both ANC and SACP are on the wrong track.

But we can rely on more than guilt by association. Slovo says in this issue of *The African Communist* that "the immediate content of the struggle is national democratic rather than socialist in character" - a slippery formulation which in Slovo's hands leads to thoroughly Kautskyite conclusions. Pointing to the failure of some petty bourgeois regimes in Africa to "pole-vault into socialism, ignoring unavoidable interim phases," he unjustifiably concludes that the Second Congress of Comintern must have been entirely wrong in suggesting that

underdeveloped ex-colonial countries could skip capitalism through a combination of their own efforts and fraternal aid from existing socialist states in more advanced countries. "In retrospect" says Slovo, "it is clear that ... in the absence of a world socialist economy into which they could integrate, the projection of an immediate socialist perspective [eg in Mozambique, Angola et al] was premature."

With this logic it will not be very long before Slovo draws the inevitable conclusion that Lenin was wrong and the Mensheviks were right in 1917, and that the land of the soviets should have been handed over to the bourgeoisie so that Russia could enjoy the benefits of capitalist development to ripen it for socialism. Likewise the Chinese, Vietnamese, Cuban (and so on) revolutions can only have compounded the initial error, and if it was premature to make these revolutions, it must also be futile to defend them.

While staying silent with regard to these countries for the time being, Slovo has already drawn these very Menshevik conclusions for South Africa. Ignoring the crucial question of *state power*, he says that the post-apartheid economy will be a mixed economy with "an increasingly socialist orientation". Of course his party will work for "the creation of political and economic conditions in which an advance to socialism will be possible". Slovo obviously wants to create a fog, but it is quite clear that the purpose of his formulations is not only to distance himself from bureaucratic socialism as practiced in the Soviet Union, but also from the aim of socialism itself.

Sneering at "revolutionary-sounding clichés and slogans", Slovo underpins his rejection of socialism and the revolution necessary to give it birth, by "making up for" a number of "quite loud silences" in his January 1990 pamphlet *Has socialism failed?* Questioning "the place of Leninism in the body of Marxist learning" he shows his rightist direction by launching a sneaky and dishonest attack on the Marxist doctrine of the party and the proletarian state.

"The concept of the party set out in *What is to be done?* is wholly inappropriate and inapplicable in conditions of legality and even more so when power is achieved," he says, in an effort to confuse form and content. It is precisely the party of a new type "set out" in *What is to be done?* that is applicable to all conditions in which communists operate. The same revisionist method can be detected in Slovo's approach to the socialist state.

Calling the dictatorship of the proletariat a "transient necessity in unique circumstances", he takes the view that "it is questionable whether the concept ... ever had validity in the context of longer term socialist aspirations." Poor old Marx and Engels thought so when they described the Paris Commune as the future for all humankind. Transient dictatorship of the proletariat may be, but it is necessary *everywhere*. It is, as Slovo surely knows, the *state form* that socialism takes.

Slovo's criticism of his previous "loud silences" does not extend to questioning the proclamation in his pamphlet of "an unprecedented era of peace" - a mirage which we ridiculed, and which was quickly tested in practice in the Gulf War.

For all his 'courageous' sweeping criticisms of Stalin's errors and crimes, he is being swept along in the wake of the even bigger *present* errors and crimes of Gorbachev. Where Stalin bureaucratically defended the USSR, Gorbachev is bureaucratically moving towards capitalist restoration. When Slovo claims that the "main thrust of perestroika and glasnost provides a basis for a renovated democratic socialism," he is not only being naive. He is showing that he will never carry through a revolution in his own country. From a renegade we should expect nothing else.

Ian Farrell

Communist Party

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Desperately seeking relevance

As the Euro organisation heads further down the road of disintegration and death, one fragment is hoping to use this as the launch pad into 'the big time'

AT LONG last it looks as if *Marxism Today*, the "theoretical and discussion journal of the Communist Party" (sic), is cutting itself free from the apron strings of the Euros.

In December last year, we pointed out that Martin Jacques, *MT* editor, who divides his time between the journal and Murdoch's *Sunday Times*, "wants to break the link between *Marxism Today* and the Euro organisation ... Jacques succeeded in getting the agreement of congress for proposals to 'broaden the ownership' of *Marxism Today*, which is in reality a code word for selling it off ... Jacques is mooted a relaunch, possibly named *Agenda*, to replace the ailing *Marxism Today*" (*The Leninist*, December 21 1990). Verily, this has come to pass.

The *Financial Times*, wherein Jacques has a few journalist friends such as regular *Marxism Today* contributor Charlie Leadbeater and John Lloyd, reported this on June 28. Now it transpires that Guardian Newspapers may take out a 51% stake in the launch of *Agenda*, under Jacques' helmsmanship. This alone would run into the £100,000s, although it is reported that most of this would be in the form of goods and services and cashflow and credit facilities. A freebie office in *The Guardian* building is also in the offing,

ironically within spitting distance of the old *Morning Star/Daily Worker* Farringdon Road premises.

What is interesting in the report, though, is the way that the *Financial Times* chooses to describe *Marxism Today*. No mention is made of the Communist Party. Instead, the journal is neutrally described as "the left-of-centre monthly magazine". Jacques, who took over the editorship from the late CPGB ideologist James Klugmann in 1977, and Julian Turner (who I do not know from Adam) are credited with being "the founders of *Marxism Today*". This is a rewriting of history worthy of Stalin himself!

Marxism Today was launched in the early 60s as the house journal of the CPGB. It was a right opportunist descendant of the Party's *Communist Review* of the 1920s, and carried the sort of rightist, carefully staged 'debate' characteristic of the Party at that time. Then Jacques got his hands on it, and it attempted to get hip: glossy covers and swift bandwagon-hopping. *Marxism Today* set itself up as a veritable abattoir of sacred cows; central to this was, of course, that Marxism is dead. Hardly surprising, then, that the ageing would-be trendy, Jacques, wants to change the name.

This inaccuracy on the part of the *Financial Times* is no mere slip of the journalistic pen, or shoddiness of re-

search. The paper knows its stuff too well. It is a rather cynical cosmetic job to help out Jacques and erase any association with communism that might still cling to the journal.

This is not just a mite disingenuous - it stinks. The last Euro congress granted Jacques a further £30,000 to keep his toy afloat. Along with this, the Euros saw it drift even further from their control. Over the years, hundreds of thousands, possibly millions, of pounds have been thrown at *Marxism Today*. The money has not come from nowhere. It has come from the finances raised by Party members. Today, it is coming from the Euros living off the fat of the past - £2 million sitting in the bank, the remnants of the self sacrifice of communists from the 1920s onwards. And financing what? The meal ticket of a pretentious Murdoch hack; a man, from our experience, who is not gifted with the social or intellectual skills to make it independently.

Under his guidance the journal has been responsible for such marvels as the launching of what was intended to be a regular share guide as a supplement - the Guechi socialist's guide to people's capitalism. This came out in October 1987 - the month of the great stock market crash when a good many people's BP shares went for a Burton. Strangely, so did *Marxism Today*'s

investment supplement...

In much the same vein, *Financial Times* journalist Leadbeater is lauding the wonders of the "social market" in July's edition. "Social market" as in Germany and Japan - the solution to society's ills! The summer was always supposed to be the silly season in British politics, but you get this sort of whimsy 12 months a year in *Marxism Today*. Jacques and crew always did travel light.

In doing so, this trend does not stay still. Jacques has made his name by kicking the stool from under what he sees as Marxism, whether it be the rejection of left Keynesian state interventionist policies or concepts of class struggle. This rightward realignment will continue as Jacques desperately seeks relevance in the world. An indication of this was a recent seminar he gave to leading personnel managers, where he informed them that the transition to the 'post-Fordist' order (yawn) had irreparably marginalised trade unionism, replacing it with the "collectivist mentality" of the social market. "Left-of-centre"? Get away with you!

As an aside, the equally abyss-bound *Morning Star* jumped for joy when the personnel managers defended the necessary (collaborative) role of the trade unions. Their own personal Valhalla was described when Spicer Engineering's personnel chief advocated "union

members on the board" (*Morning Star*, June 29). Lord, who needs communism when you can get your feet under the board's table?

Sadly, the dimwits who knock out the *Star* cannot see any further than what Jacques says today (and they agree with what he was saying five years ago). He and his *Agenda* will continue to move rightwards. After dispatching *Marxism* (ahem), he will undoubtedly move to tilt at the liberal theories of your average *Guardian* reader - from the right. *Marxism Today* has already covered some of this ground, and Jacques already professes "a lot of sympathy for what Thatcherism was trying to achieve".

Attacks on trade unionists have been defended, as have attacks on poll tax protesters. Once you accept that the state is the vehicle for social change, ie the reformist project, then anything that challenges that state threatens that project. It becomes the problem. How long before Jacques starts justifying attacks on the black community? He has already defended the massacre of the Gulf War. How long before he defends attacks on lesbians and gays?

If you think that this is just a flight of fancy, think of the ground that *Marxism Today* has already covered. And remember where Oswald Mosley started.

Sean Quinn

THE PUBLICATION of *Alert Scotland* is yet another sure sign that the end is nigh for the Euro organisation. Torn apart by the pro-Democratic Left, *Marxism Today*, Straight Leftist and ever more factions, *Alert Scotland* represents a new, nationalist, fault line.

The ground for this development was laid long ago. For years the revisionists in Scotland have traded under the nationalist 'Scottish Communist Party' name, preferring to avoid all reference to the Communist Party of Great Britain. This represented a crude and thoroughly opportunist attempt to ride the growth of nationalist sentiment in Scotland. Having sown, so shall ye reap.

In the name of "renewing" themselves the Euro Executive Committee voted to rename their organisation the Democratic Left. Of course, this involves more than a change in headed notepaper. The Euros are intent on a transformation that will see red replaced by green and purple, communism by the market and centralism by federalism. This will take them out of any sort of working class politics and into the camp of petty bourgeois radicalism. It will also speed up the process of disintegration and collapse.

As is always the case, frustrated by the relentless cycle of decline, an ever ageing membership and the prospect of political nemesis, some are wont to say enough is enough and call a halt to "endless" factional debate. It will be

appreciated that there is a rich irony here. For all their good intentions, the anti-factionalists inevitably become factionalists themselves and add to the liquidationist momentum.

Such is the case with *Alert Scotland*. In the name of defending what exists, those around it find themselves advocating a Scottish UDI.

True, as is the nature of opportunism, they deny it. They pretend that they are for continuing the Communist Party. Yet for all the stuff about "retaining the best traditions of the CPGB" and holding "firmly to the central aim of socialism", the separatist perspective and the reformist nature of its politics cannot be hidden.

Alert Scotland has nothing to do with "retaining the best traditions of the CPGB", the traditions of its revolutionary founding principles, its determination to support the Labour Party "like a rope supports a hanged man",

its vanguard role in the 1926 General Strike, its leadership of the National Unemployed Workers' Movement.

Nor has its nationalism anything to do with the revolutionary nationalism of Sinn Fein and the IRA. The tradition that *Alert Scotland* stands on is the tradition of 1970s and 1980s revisionism as seen through the prism of those who put a Scottish parliament, not socialism, at the centre of their politics. As with the Democratic Left, not for them the red flag. But instead of the eco green and the suffragette purple they prefer the "saltire and lion rampant flags" of Scotland's feudal kings.

Predictably, from such beginnings there is an easy descent into a petty haggling over the division of property. Having neither the perspective nor thought of smashing the existing state in Britain, but instead the aim of establishing a new layer within it, *Alert*

Scotland bases its whole separatist project on reclaiming "part of" the Euro organisation's £2 million assets (accumulated through selfless sacrifice by two generations of communists).

Alert Scotland twitters on about inflaming the political passions of Scotland's young people, but the section of society which it actually looks to is dour, narrow and conservative. The party *Alert Scotland* wants is designed to serve not the working class but the labour bureaucracy in general and the Scottish TUC in particular; apparently it "continues to represent the voice of sanity".

So the huff and puff against the Nina Temple leadership and *Marxism Today* does not represent a positive development in the Euro organisation in Scotland. *Alert Scotland* represents decay. Its politics are just as rotten, just as reformist, just as hopeless as the politics of Euro Scottish secretary, Doug

- call the police - Chalmers, and the earlier breakaway, the *Morning Star*'s Communist Party of Britain. Its latherings about a Scottish parliament, PR and chummy fronts with churchmen are part of the problem, not the answer.

So what is the answer for communists operating in Scotland? We need a reformed Communist Party of Great Britain. A Party that stands against nationalism and for revolution, a Party which while fighting for the right of the Scottish people to self determination seeks to unite the working class in Britain.

Through polemic, through practice, we will show communists in Scotland that their strength lies in unity with their comrades in England and Wales. There is nothing sentimental in this. For genuine communists it is a well tried principle to organise, not on the basis of nation or nationality, but on the basis of the existing state, so as to smash it through revolution.

This was something Lenin insisted on against revolutionaries such as Willie Gallacher and John MacLean who toyed with the idea of setting up a separate Communist Party in Scotland. It is something we insist on today against the reformists of *Alert Scotland* who are intent on making the same mistake.

Gavin Kyle

Alert Scotland is available from 6, Calderglen Road, East Kilbride.

Red Alert?

One less hyped fragment of the Euro organisation is looking to swap red for tartan